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**Secretary
James G. Roche**

SECAF reflects on past year, looks to future

The following is a message from Secretary of the Air Force James G. Roche to Air Force personnel:

To the men and women of the U.S. Air Force:

One year ago this month, I was sworn in as your 20th secretary of the Air Force and became, on that day, a proud member of a magnificent team of active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian airmen. During this time, I've had the deep honor and pleasure to serve alongside Gens. Mike Ryan and John Jumper, and our chief master sergeant of the Air Force, Jim Finch. It is impossible to imagine three more dedicated and professional Air Force leaders.

As I reflect on the year gone by, my first thoughts are with the airmen of our force who made the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of our nation and the freedoms we hold dear. Remember them and their families. Their supreme sacrifice, along with the countless heroes who have gone before them, is why we live free in this great nation.

Each of you should be extremely proud of your achievements and service this past year, from combat operations and homeland defense in the war against international terrorism, to your admirable and noble daily endeavors that guarantee the readiness, health, security and morale of our fighting force. In my travels around our Air Force, I've been impressed and humbled by your ingenuity, commitment and willingness to serve. Thank you for everything you've done to make our Air Force the best the world has ever known.

Of utmost importance to me is our continued focus on warfighting, and honing the edge that enables us to remain expeditionary and responsive to the needs of our nation. The American people trust and admire what you do. They know that America's Air Force provides a full spectrum of air and space capabilities that deliver unprecedented firepower, mobility, awareness and deterrence to our joint forces. And, once again, they've witnessed first hand your truly remarkable performance during operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle.

Through your incredible efforts in this campaign, from deploying troops and building bases to coordinating fires and engaging targets, you've again demonstrated the unrivaled skill of airmen. Consider what we've done for just a moment.

In the first eight months of our war on terrorism, we flew more than 35,000 sorties, employing 78 percent of the total munitions used and damaging or destroying nearly three-quarters of the coalition targets. Our tanker force flew more than 10,000 refueling missions, supporting aircraft from all services.

Our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets, manned and unmanned, have flown more than 2,000 missions and, when combined with our indispensable space systems, delivered unprecedented battlefield awareness, as well as a vision of the exciting future in this evolving mission area. Our heavy-lifters (cargo aircraft) delivered more than 2.5 million humanitarian daily rations to the people of Afghanistan. Our combat support units have occupied, established, or rebuilt bases throughout Southwest and Central Asia.

And we accomplished all this despite the challenge of waging a combined campaign in a landlocked nation.

Through your efforts, you confirmed to our nation and the world the unmatched value, flexibility and promise of air and space power.

While we've achieved many of our objectives, there remains much work to be done. The fight continues, with many of you going into harm's way daily. Our ongoing missions and your unrelenting sacrifices testify to your commitment to eradicate this threat to our nation and freedom-loving people everywhere. Most important, we need to prepare and resolve ourselves to see this through to the finish, regardless of where the fight takes us.

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Many of you are deployed around the world at remote and inhospitable settings, spending extended time away from your families. Many more are scheduled to deploy in the months ahead. Some of you no longer are benefiting from the air and space expeditionary force schedule and are facing more frequent deployments. We've asked many of you to put in long hours well beyond your normal schedules, and we've stretched our force to cover expanded missions in new locations. Many of our people are affected by Stop-Loss.

We're working to mitigate the numbers affected as soon as possible, but until we do, our folks' lives will remain on hold until we complete this campaign. And we have thousands of Air National Guardsmen, Air Force Reservists, and Individual Mobilization Augmentees who are serving for extended periods at great personal cost to their civilian jobs and their family lives. I recognize your sacrifice and commend you for your service.

Our nation needs its Air Force as never before, and your Air Force needs each and every one of you, your talents and your service as never before. Yet, regardless of these challenges, you continue to train, maintain and fight with a level of professionalism unmatched by any force ever assembled.

As I look to the journey ahead, I'm excited at the opportunities we have to serve our nation as we face the challenges posed by our evolving security environment. I look forward to continuing that journey with you.

I remain focused on developing new strategies for air and space power in this new millennium; delivering innovative and effective capabilities to the warfighters; improving Air Force retention, professional education and leadership development; eliminating the inefficiencies in how we do our business; and transforming our acquisition processes to ensure innovation and competitive vibrancy within our defense industrial base.

Most important, I want to ensure we care for our people and their families through these challenging times. Communication, engaged leadership at all levels, and a genuine concern for the value of our people and their daily sacrifices are vital to building and sustaining a motivated and capable force.

On that day one year ago, I committed myself to serve in a manner befitting of the great men and women of our Air Force and to serve just as each of you do every day all around the globe — with integrity, selflessness and in the earnest pursuit of excellence. Your entire leadership team — General Jumper; my talented undersecretary, Peter Teets; our vice chief of staff, Gen. Robert "Doc" Foglesong; and myself — is firmly committed to these values.

Your service and sacrifices the past year have been truly magnificent and have earned the justifiable admiration of our nation and the respect of the world. @